



DRAFT

Responsive Repairs Policy

August 09

SOUTHWAY HOUSING TRUST

RESPONSIVE REPAIRS POLICY

1. Policy Objectives

1.1 The overall aim of this policy is to contribute to the efficient and effective maintenance of the Trust's housing stock.

1.2 The specific objectives are:-

- To provide an efficient, prompt and cost effective response repairs service, which is easily understood.
- To promote understanding of the Trust's legal responsibilities and mutual obligations in relation to responsive repairs issues.
- To achieve high standards in customer care.
- To monitor the performance of the response repairs service to seek continuous improvement.
- To provide a service which reflects the Trust's commitment to equality of access to the repairs service for all tenants and, to take account in particular the needs of vulnerable groups.

1.3 The principles underpinning the Responsive Repairs Policy are:-

- That all tenants are involved and consulted in the development of the service and its operational procedures.
- That through supervision, monitoring and feedback from tenants the service is continuously improved.
- That communication with tenants is always appropriate, easily understood and easily accessible.
- That the repairs service is supported by appropriate training for staff.

2. Scope and Application

2.1 The intention of this policy is to provide information to tenants and leaseholders about the repairing obligations of the Trust and that of the tenants of Trust properties. It outlines the procedure for reporting repairs and how repairs are prioritised dependent on urgency.

2.2 The policy is applicable to tenants, leaseholders and staff of the Trust in effecting an efficient and responsive repairs service.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Repairs to Southway properties are a joint responsibility between landlord and customer. As the landlord Southway has responsibility for the majority of repairs and the overall maintenance of its homes. Our customers have the responsibility of reporting repairs and undertaking those repairs deemed their responsibility.

3.2 Southway will provide both long term maintenance and improvements, and a twenty four hour repair service for its customers. However in the interest of value for money repairs rather than replacements will usually be undertaken.

4. Southway Housing Trust Responsibilities

4.1 Repair of Structure and Exterior

The Trust will keep the structure and exterior of the premises in good repair including:

- the roof
- drains, gutters and external pipes
- outside walls
- outside doors
- window sills and window frames, including any necessary external painting or decoration
- internal walls, skirting boards, doors and door frames, door jambs, thresholds, floors and ceilings (but not painting and decoration)
- major internal plasterwork
- chimneys and chimney stacks (but not sweeping the chimneys where solid fuel open fires are in use)
- fences and gates where provided by the Trust
- pathways, steps, ramps and stairlifts
- garages and outbuildings (where provided by the Trust)

4.2 Repair of Installations

The Trust will keep in repair and proper working order any installations provided or adopted by the Trust for space heating, water heating and sanitation and for the supply of water, gas and electricity, including;

- water pipes and tanks, gas pipes and electrical wiring
- electrical sockets and light fittings (but not plugs, fuses, light bulbs or customer's own appliances)
- basins, sinks, baths, toilets, flushing systems, waste pipes and tap washers
- water heaters, boilers, fireplaces, fitted fires and radiators

4.3 Repair of Common Parts

In the case of flats, the Trust will keep all communal areas and equipment in repair including;

- common entrances, halls and passageways
- stairways and lifts
- lighting and security systems

4.4 Decoration of Exterior and Common Parts

The Trust will keep the exterior of the premises and any common parts in a reasonable state of decoration.

4.5 Right to Buy Applications

4.6 When a tenant has applied to buy their home, pending completion of the purchase only emergency & statutory repairs will be carried out.

4.7 Repairs – Generally

The Trust will;

- Confirm the repair appointment with the customer either verbally or in writing as chosen by the customer. If the repair is an emergency or urgent repair due to be carried out within 2 days written confirmation will not be issued.
- Carry out all repairs within such reasonable timescales as may be determined by the Trust from time to time in consultation with you.
- Clear up after a repair – decoration will be left as close as possible to how it was before the work was done.

5. Customer Responsibilities

5.1 Reporting Repairs

Repairs, faults or damage must be reported as soon as possible. They can be reported in a number of ways

- Via telephone to Southway Connect on 448 4200 or text-phone 448 4349 (we also have multi lingual facilities available by the use of 'the BigWord' Language Service'.
- In writing via letters or e-mails
- On line via the Trusts website at www.southwayhousing.co.uk
- In person at the Trust office located at Aspen House, 825 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury
- To a member of staff at a visit to the property

5.2 Access

Customers must allow access for workers sent by Southway Housing Trust to inspect and carry out repairs and improvements. In emergencies we will need immediate access to prevent risk to the customer and their neighbours. Prevention of access may result in legal action for which the Trust's costs will be sought.

5.3 Maintenance of Internal Items

Customers must keep the interior of the premises in good repair and in a clean and good decorative condition. Customers must decorate all internal parts of the premises as frequently as necessary to keep them in reasonable decorative order. The Trust may be able to help elderly or disabled customers with internal decoration.

If chimneys are in use with an open solid fuel fire, it must be swept at least once every twelve months.

Customers must not remove walls or any other part of the home without the Trust's prior agreement in writing.

5.4 Minor Repairs

Customers must carry out minor repairs to the premises such as the following;

- easing internal doors
- the maintenance of appliances, fixtures, fittings, extensions and additions (where installed by a customer with or without permission unless formally adopted by the Trust)
- the replacement of lost or damaged keys, and the replacement of locks caused by the losing of keys (where the Trust so decides)
- replacing electrical fuses and light bulbs
- sink and bath plugs and chains*
- Pre decoration repairs such as filling small plaster cracks
- Television aerials or satellite dishes (unless communal) and any damage to property or neighbouring property caused by their installation
- clothes posts* and lines (unless communal)
- broken tidy-dry
- broken or missing edging on a kitchen unit*
- broken or missing smoke detector*

We will do those repairs marked * for older or disabled customers.

6. Improvements

- 6.1 Customers have the right to put in their own improvements such as central heating, a shower or a gas fire.
- 6.2 Customers must not make any improvements, alterations or additions to the premises without first obtaining both the written consent of the Trust and all other necessary approvals, such as planning and building regulation approval. The Trust will not refuse permission unless there is good reason.
- 6.3 Customers must comply with the reasonable requirements of the Trust in relation to any consent given to make improvements, alterations or additions to the premises, including the standard of the work to be carried out.
- 6.4 If requested, the Trust may agree to repair or maintain any improvement but the rent may be increased to cover the extra cost of repair and maintenance.

7. Rechargeable Repairs Policy

- 7.1 The Trust has a specific policy for Rechargeable Repairs which deals with repairs caused due to neglect or wilful damage.

8. Compensation

- 8.1 The trust has a specific policy for Compensation which can be referred to for advice in appropriate cases.

9. Timescales

- 9.1 To enable us to achieve an efficient and effective service, repairs will be prioritised and put into categories of urgency. We give repairs one of four deadlines. They are:
 - **Emergencies** – These will be attended within three hours. Such repairs must be a very urgent threat to the health, safety or security of a customer or property.

Staff should always advise customers to report gas leaks to Transco – 0870 608 1524. The most up-to-date telephone number will be given on utility bills.
 - **Urgent Repairs** – These will be completed within 5 working days and by appointment. Some of these are set out by the Statutory Right to Repair Legislation of which the Trust has a specific policy that can be referred to.
 - **Routine Repairs** – These will be completed within 10 working days and by appointment.

- **Major Repairs** – These will be completed within 45 working days. This category would be for larger repairs, where the customer's day to day life is not affected or the work needs specialist manufacture.

9.2 Saturday and Sunday do not count as 'working days'. The first appointment we offer will usually be on or just before the deadline.

10. **Repairs by Appointment**

10.1 The Trust will make an appointment to get most repairs completed at a time that is convenient for our customers.

10.2 Customers can choose appointments weekdays, Monday to Friday. There are five appointment 'windows' each day from early morning to early evening.

The slots customers can choose from are;

- Early Morning – 8.00 a.m. to 10.30 a.m.
- Late Morning – 10.00 a.m. to noon
- Early Afternoon – 12.30 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.
- Late Afternoon – 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.
- Early Evening – 4.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m.

10.3 Customers are encouraged to;

- Make sure someone waits at home for the whole appointment time.
- Always ask to check identification – all our workers carry identity cards with their photograph on.

10.4 Repairs which do not get an appointment are;

- Emergencies – we do not make appointments for emergency repairs because we will attend within three hours, so customers are advised just to stay at home and wait for us.
- Major Repairs – we will not immediately offer you an appointment because these jobs usually involve replacing large items rather than repairing them. However, prior to starting work, staff will contact customers and agree a mutually convenient date and time to start the work.

11. **Standards**

11.1 **Ordering a Repair**

The following are the standards our customers can expect when they use our repairs service;

- We will publish our timescales for doing repairs.

- Customers can order repairs online or over the telephone. The Southway daytime telephone service is open from 8.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Monday to Friday. Customers can report an emergency repair by telephone twenty four hours a day, seven days a week.
- We will immediately order the repair or arrange an inspection to check exactly what needs doing.
- If the repair is inside the home we will agree an appointment that will be within our published timescales, unless this is not convenient to the customer.

11.2 Carrying Out the Repair

- We will send a fully-trained worker at the appointed time.
- Our worker will show official identification, and will be polite and helpful.
- Our worker will carry out the repair or the inspection, as described on the confirmation letter, and will ensure that they leave the property clean and tidy.
- If our worker cannot do all the work needed on that visit, s/he will explain why and immediately arrange another convenient appointment.
- If the problem is being inspected first, our worker will tell you what needs doing and when it will be done by.

11.3 After the Repair

- Our worker will provide a freepost form asking our customer how satisfied they were with the work.
- If a customer tells us they were not happy with the work, we will investigate the situation, if there is still a problem, we will put it right.
- We will regularly publish our repairs performance (for example, how many jobs are completed on time) on the internet and in Southway publications.

12. Repairs Quality

12.1 Checking Quality

Monitoring the quality of the repairs service will be achieved by:

- Post inspecting a minimum of 10% of all repairs undertaken. This will ensure that the repair completed is done to the correct standard using the proper materials.

- By leaving a freepost form asking our customer how satisfied they were with the work and the overall service provided. This will give customers the chance to say how well or badly the repairs service is performing. Southway Housing Trust will be able to use this information to improve the service and deal with individual complaints or poor performance.

12.2 Repairs Contractors

The repairs service is delivered by the Trust's own, in-house, contractor. As such Southway will, through its own staff and specialist advisors, directly manage competence and performance to ensure the highest standards of work and the most cost effective service is delivered.

In instances where Southway employs external contractors, they will be rigorously vetted to ensure financial stability, competence to achieve high quality work, cost effectiveness and compliance with the Trust's Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy. The Trust would take action against any contractor it uses if the contractor consistently fell short of the performance standards set. Any persistent failure would result in Southway ceasing to use that contractor.

13 Key Performance Indicators and Performance Monitoring

13.1 The Trust will measure its repair performance by using, and issuing, a suite of KPI's that can be benchmarked against similar RSL's and include the ones commonly used by the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) during an inspection;

- % of emergency repairs completed on time
- % of urgent repairs completed on time
- % of routine repairs completed on time
- % of customers satisfied with the service provided

13.2 Monitoring of the Responsive Repairs Service will be carried out on a daily basis by supervisory staff. Regular reports on performance will be provided to the Executive Team, Board and Customers. Evidence of the Trust's performance in relation to Key Performance Indicators will be supplied to the TSA at the required frequency.

13.3 The Director of Regeneration and Asset Management will be responsible for the implementation and revision of the policy.

13.4 This policy will be reviewed within two years of its Board approval date.

14. Equality and Diversity

14.1. Southway will ensure that this policy is applied fairly to all our customers. We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people because of their race, religion, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or other grounds set out in our Equality and Diversity Policy.

- 14.2. When applying this policy we will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities.
- 14.3. This policy and any other related publications of Southway Housing Trust can be provided on request in other formats (e.g. in an alternative language, in Braille, on tape, in large print).

15 Involving Customers

- 15.1 Customers will be encouraged to contribute to service development and to provide feedback on the performance of contractors, the materials used and the effectiveness of our policies and procedures via the Repairs Service Improvement Group, Southway Consultative Group and customer feedback questionnaires.

16 Link with Other Southway Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policy/policies:

- Out of Hours Emergency Repairs
- Asbestos
- Right to Repair
- Rechargeable Repairs
- Customer Compensation Policy
- Equal Opportunities
- Customer Care
- Voids Management
- Equipment and Adaptations Policy

Note also the relevant clauses in the Southway Tenancy Agreement

<u>POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW HISTORY</u>	
Date Approved by Board: 08/09/09	Date Implemented: 08/09/09
Projected Date of Review: 09/2011	
Review Date: / /	
<u>Amendment(s) Made/Reason</u>	
Date Amendment(s) Approved by Board: / /	Date Implemented: / /